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hours tumultuous waves come and go sporadically, while about the mile-wide boca the choppy sea sometimes takes the form of spire-like jets, spurting 5 or 10 feet high and breaking into aigrettes of glittering spray in most unwaterlike and wholly indescribable fashion. Dewey described the strait as "unsafe for navigation by any except the smallest class of vessels"; it is safe, indeed, only for portable and indestructible craft like the Seri balsas, which may be put off or carried ashore at will by craftsmen willing to wait for wind and tide, and unpossessed of impediments of a sort to be injured by wetting. Of such an environment the balsa is a natural product.

The adjunct islets of Seriland are miniatures of Tiburon in all essential respects, save that they are without fresh water. The largest is San Esteban, a somewhat complex butte rising sharply from the waters in a nearly continuous sea-cliff recording vigorous work by storms and tides; it is occasionally visited by the Seri, chiefly in search of water-fowl and eggs. The most important of the series in Seri economy and mythology is Isla Tasnne, off the mouth of Bahia Kino; it is a rugged butte some 600 feet high, rising in wave-cut cliffs on the sea side and pedimented by low spits and banks of sand toward the lea; the sand-banks are literally flocked with pelicans, while other fowl cover the flatter ledges and crowd the crannies of the pinnacle. Isla Turner is a somewhat smaller and still more rugged butte, bounded on both sides by precipitous cliffs, while Roca Foca is merely a great rock shelving upward from the storm-swept waters off the most exposed angle of Tiburon; in the crannies of the former birds nest abundantly, while the lower ledges of both are haunted by seals. Isla Patos, north of Tiburon, is a breeding-place for different water-fowl, and is especially noted as a refuge for ducks; it, too, is for the most part a rocky butte, with a sandy shelf at the eastern base. Beyond San Esteban lies the similar but smaller Isla San Lorenzo, while Isla Salsipuedes and a few other islets stretch thence northward half way to the southern point of Isla Angel de la Guarda, the second-largest island of the gulf. San Lorenzo and the smaller islets are occasionally visited by the Seri, partly for a mineral pigment used in face-painting, partly in quest of game; and they sometimes push on to the larger island to enjoy its fairly abundant game, including the easily taken iguana, amid the ruins of an ancient culture apparently akin to that of southern Mexico. Even the most frequented islets, Tasnne and Patos, can be reached only by crossing miles of open sea; but in their way the Seri are as canny navigators as they are skilful boat-builders—it is their habit to hug the shore in threatening weather, to await wind and tide for hours or days together, to set out on distant journeys only when all conditions favor, and in emergency to seize inspiration from the storm like the vikings of old, and bend supernormal power to the control of their craft.

Summarily, the prevailing features of Seriland may be said to be

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X175 immediately burned), as well as bones and other remains of horses.[1] On August 28 and 29 Espence skirted the abrupt and rocky coasts of Tiburon, west and south of the northern bay, without seeing trace of natives; on the 30th he reached the western bay, where he found huts and fresh tracks, and captured a woman disabled by snake-bite. Farther down the bay he encountered a considerable party, who first prepared to attack, and then, overawed by his bold front, used for peace; whereupon he accepted their submission, and sent them with a letter to Colonel Andrade. This affair concluded, and escaping currents so contrary that he was nearly locked ("por las corrientes encontradas que me volvian loco"),[2] he coasted southward; and on September 1, at the southwestern point of the island, he found another rancheria, and made peaceful conquest of the occupants, whom he also sent with a letter to Andrade. Thence he coasted eastward, and, on September 3, returned to his starting point, "having navigated the island in the period of nine days, having in this time burned 64 huts and 97 balsas, and reduced to peace 194 Indians with their families." The next day he transported the captives to the mainland, "their number, comprising men, women, and children, reaching 384, besides about 37 remaining at large on the island."[3] On September 5 the remaining troops were transferred to the mainland, with the exception of a small detachment, which remained for an unspecified, but evidently short period, in the vain hope of corraling the warriors, with the families to which they belonged, supposed (on grounds not given) to remain on the island. The troops and their captives immediately moved to Laguna de los Cercaditos (probably Laguna la Cruz) to rejoin the cavalry guard; thence, suffering much from thirst, they marched toward Hermosillo, arriving at that place September 12,[4] where the troops and captives formed a triumphal procession, met on the highroad by the merchants and the civil and military authorities, and greeted by the ringing of bells and the firing of rockets, and with music and refreshments.

[114] [224]

[1] The expressions of the journal indicate that Espence was not familiar with the Seri custom of eviscerating and quartering stolen stock, consuming the entrails at once, and transporting the more substantial pieces across the strait on their balsas. Velasco fell into still further error in assuming that the expressions relate to tracks and other indications of the presence of living stock on the island.

[2] Velasco, op. cit., p. 102.

[3] Ibid., p. 103. On the same page Espence classifies the captives as 9 old men ("viejos de cuenta ahos arriba"), 12 boldmen ("viejos de cuarenta arriba"), 1 blind, 1 idiotic boy, 5 crippled male, 1 crippled female, 140 women, 140 children, and 144 men—510 in all. Andrade's report enumerates the captives as 120 in each of two lots, with 20 or more in a third, making 260 odd (Ibid., p. 100); while Velasco put the number at 300 and odd ("doscientas y tantas personas"), men, women, and children, including only 30 odd oldsters and warriors combined. The discrepancies are characteristic, and of a piece with those prevailing in the same latitude and longitude today: e. g., Velasco says there are but four waters on the island, Espence says there are eight or ten, and Andrade implies that there are many; Velasco says there were 100 troops from Guaymas, while Andrade mentions only 80; Espence says that in transporting the stock (as noted above) but one mule was drowned by the strength of the current, while Andrade says that a mule and a steer were lost on account of the bad storm which prevailed during the day; yet there is such agreement between dates and facts in the independent journals of Andrade and Espence as to establish general verity despite the provincial vagueness concerning details.

[4] According to Andrade (Ibid., p. 102); Velasco says September 16 (Ibid., p. 104).

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blocks or metates, though it is manifest that most of the camps were fireless and many foodless. It is particularly noteworthy that even the more temporary resting-places are seldom if ever less than a mile or two from the nearest fresh water. In short, the Seri are not a domiciliary folk, but rather homeless wanderers, customarily roving from place to place, frequently if not commonly sleeping where overtaken by exhaustion or storm, ordinarily slumbering through a part of the day and watching by night, habitually avoiding fresh waters save in hurried and stealthy visits, and apparently gathering in their flimsy huts only on special occasions. 361 [312]

In conformity with their rovingness the Seri are notable burden-bearers. They habitually carry their entire stock of personal belongings (arms, implements, utensils, and bedding), as well as their stock of food and—weightiest burden of all—the water requisite for prolonged sustenance amid scorching deserts, in all their wanderings, the water being borne chiefly by women, in ollas, either balanced on the head singly or slung in pairs on rude yokes like those of Chinese coolies. And they have never grasped the idea of imposing their burdens on their bestial associates; their coyote-curs are not harnessed or even led; when they surround and capture horses, burros, and kine they make no use of ropes, never think of mounting even when pursued by vaqueros, but immediately break the necks or club out the brains of the beasts, perchance to tear the writhing body into quarters and flee for their lives with the reeking flesh still quivering on their sturdy heads and brawny shoulders—and scores of vaqueros agree in the affirmation (wholly incredible as it would be if supported by fewer witnesses) that even when so burdened the Seri skim the sand wastes of Desierto Encinas more rapidly than avenging horsemen can follow. 482 [231] 224 177 [481]

The hardly conceivable fleetness of the Seri is conformable with their habitual rovingness and their ability as burden-bearers; and this faculty is established by cumulative evidence so voluminous and consistent as to outweigh the presumption arising from the standards attained among other peoples. A few minutes after they were photographed, the group of boys shown in plate XVI, with several others of about the same size, provided themselves with a stock of their favorite human-hair cords, "rounded up" a dozen mongrel coyote-dogs haunting the rancheria at Costa Rica, and herded the unwilling animals toward a shrubbery-free space a quarter of a mile away, in order to rope them in imitation of the work of the Mexican cowboys earlier in the morning. From time to time as they went a frightened cur sneaked or broke through the cordon of boys, and made for distant shrub-tufts at top speed; yet in every case a boy darted from the ring, headed off the animal within one or two hundred yards, and lashed it back to its place. On arriving at their miniature rodeo the boys widened their ring, and at a signal scattered and frightened the dogs; then, when the fleeing animals had a fair start, each selected his victim and fol- 177 231 481 857

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loved it, yelling and swinging his light lasso, until, after much doubling and dodging and many unsuccessful casts, he caught and dragged the howling beast back to the open; and it was only after half a dozen repetitions that enough dogs had escaped to spoil the sport. As the boys lounged chattering back toward the rancheria their course lay between two clumps of the usual desert shrubbery, so placed that when the first was obliquely left and 40 or 50 feet distant from them, the other was obliquely right and 100 feet away. At this point a bevy of small birds (perhaps blackbirds—at any rate corresponding to blackbirds in size and flight) fluttered suddenly out of the nearer clump toward the more distant one, when, too instantaneously for the untrained eye to catch exchange of signal or beginning of movement, the boys lunged forward in a common effort to seize the birds; and though none were entirely successful, one exultantly displayed a tuft of feathers clutched by his fingers as the bird darted into and through the thorny harbor. When the distances were paced it was found that, although the birds had the advantage of the start, the boys covered at least 90 per cent of their distance in the same time; while the spontaneity of the impulse demonstrated habitual chase of flying game under fit conditions.

While obtaining the Seri vocabulary with Mashém's aid, advantage was taken of every opportunity to secure collateral information concerning the actual use of the terms, and thereby of gaining insight into the tribal habits. Through his naive explanations, usually repeated and corroborated by the elderwoman of the Turtle clan (Juana María) and others of the tribe, it was learned that half-grown Seri boys are fond of hunting hares (jack-rabbits); that they usually go out for this purpose in threes or fours; that when a hare is started they scatter, one following it slowly while the others set off obliquely in such manner as to head it off and keep it in a zigzag or doubling course until it tires; and that they then close in and take the animal in their hands, frequently bringing it in alive to show that it was fairly caught—for it is deemed discreditable, if not actually wrong, to take game animals without giving them opportunity for escape or defense by exercise of their natural powers. Similarly, Mashém described the chase of the burro and other deer as ordinarily conducted by five persons (of whom one or two may be youths), who scatter at sight of the quarry, gradually surround it, bewilder it by confronting it at all points, and finally close in either to seize it with their hands, or perhaps to brain it with a stone or short club; the former being held the proper way and the latter a partial failure. This hunting custom, described as a commonplace by Mashém, is established by the vaqueros who had frequently witnessed it from a distance; and the same extra-tribal observers described still more striking feats of individual Seri hunters: Don Manuel, son of Señor Encinas, and Don Ygnacio Lozania were endeavoring to train to work a robust Seri (one of a band sojourning temporarily at Costa

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Rica) noted for his prowess in hunting. One hot afternoon he begged relief from his tasks, saying the spirit of catching a deer had hold on him; and he was excused on condition that the deer be brought entire to the rancho. Two hours later he was seen driving in a full-grown buck; on approaching the rancho the terrified animal turned this way and that, describing long arcs in wild efforts to avoid the human habitation; yet the hunter kept beyond it, heading it off at every turn and gradually working it nearer, until, at a sudden turn, he was able to rush on it; whereupon he caught it, threw it over his shoulders, and ran in to the rancho with the animal still struggling and kicking off its overheated hoofs. 224

Señor Encinas himself, with Don Andrés Noriega and several other attachés, vouch for the catching of a horse by a Seri hunter in still more expeditious fashion: one of the horses belonging to the rancho was exceptionally fat, and hence exceptionally tempting to the Seri band (and at the same time worthless to the vaqueros); the chief begged for it persistently until, wearied by his importunities, the ranchero offered the horse to the band on condition that a single one of them should catch it within a fixed distance (about 200 yards) from the gateway of the corral—and the offer was promptly accepted. With the view of making the test of fleetness fair, a vaquero was called in to frighten the horse and start him running around the interior of the corral, while a boy stood by to drop the bars at the proper moment, the Indian standing ready outside the gateway; when the animal had gained its best speed the bars were dropped and it bolted for the open plains—but before the 200-yard limit was reached the hunter had overtaken it, leaped on its withers, caught it by the jaw in one hand and the foretop in the other, and thereby thrown it in such manner as to break its neck. Knowing of these and other instances, L. K. Thompson, of Hermosillo, undertook arrangements for publicly exhibiting Seri runners as deer catchers at different expositions during the nineties; but his arrangements failed, chiefly because of the anticipated (and probably underestimated) difficulty of taming the Seri sufficiently for the purpose. [648]

About 1893, Señor Encinas and several attendants left Costa Rica one morning for Hermosillo, leaving at the rancho, among others, a Seri matron with a sick child nearly a year old; in the evening (as they learned later) the child was worse, and the matron took the trail about dusk, in the hope of finding a cure in the white man's touch or other medicine—and at dawn next morning she was at Molino del Encinas, 17 leagues (nearly 45 miles) away, with her helpless child and a peace offering in the form of a hare, which she had run down and caught in the course of the journey. And the matrons, with children astride their hips and water-filled ollas balanced on their heads, and all their goods and chattels piled on their backs, habitually traverse Desierto Encinas from the sea to Costa Rica (some 30 miles), or from Costa Rica to the sea, in a night. 481 [484]

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224 While by far the larger share of Seri sustenance is drawn from the sea, a not inconsiderable portion is derived from the land; for the warriors and striplings and even the women are more skilful hunters than fishers.

The larger objects of the feral chase are deer of two or three species (the bura, or mule-deer, being most conspicuous and easiest taken), antelope, and mountain sheep; to which the puma, the jaguar, and perhaps two or three other carnivores might be added. The conventional method of taking the bura and other deer is a combination of stalking and coursing, usually conducted by five of the younger warriors, though three or four may serve in emergency; any excess over five being regarded as superfluous, or as a confession of inferiority. The chase is conducted in a distinctly ceremonial and probably ritualistic fashion, even when the finding of the game is casual, or incidental to a journey: at sight of the quarry, the five huntsmen scatter stealthily in such manner as partially to surround it; when it takes fright one after the other strives to show himself above the shrubbery or dunes in order to break its line of flight into a series of zigzags; and whether successful in this effort or not they keep approximate pace with it until it tires, then gradually surround it, and finally rush in to either seize it in their hands or cripple it with clubs—though the latter procedure is deemed undignified, if not wrong, and hardly less disreputable than complete failure. When practicable the course is laid toward the rancheria or camp; and in any event the ideal finish is to bring the animal alive into the family group, where it may be dissected by the women, and where the weaklings may receive due share of the much-prized blood and entrails. The dissection is merely a ravenous
264 rending of skin and flesh, primarily with the teeth (perhaps after oblique bruising or tearing by blows with the hupf over strongly flexed joints), largely with hands and fingers aided anon by a foot planted on the carcass, and partly with some improvised device, such as a horn or tooth of the victim itself, the serrated edge of a shell cup, or perhaps a sharp-edged cane-splint from a broken arrow carried for emergency's sake. Commonly the entire animal, save skin and harder bones, is gulped at a sitting in which the zeal of the devotee and the frenzy of the carnivore blend; but in case the group is small and the quarry large, the sitting is extended by naps or prolonged slumberings, and
[252] the more energetic squaws may even trouble to kindle a fire and partially cook the larger joints, thereby inciting pallid appetite to new efforts. Finally the leg bones are split for the marrow and their ends
[237] preserved for awls; the horns are retained by the successful huntsmen
[281] as talisman-trophies; while the skin is stretched in the desert sun, scratched and gnawed free of superfluous tissue, rubbed into partial
224 pliability, and kept for bedding or robe or kilt.
857 The chase of the hare is closely parallel to that of the deer save that it is conducted by striplings, who thereby serve apprenticeship in hunt-

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ing and at the same time enrich the tribal larder with a game beneath the dignity of the warriors; while still smaller boys similarly chase the rabbit, which is commonly scorned by the striplings. The conventional hare-hunting party is three, and it is deemed disreputable to increase this number greatly. The youths spread at sight of the game and seek to surround it, taking ingenious and constant advantage of the habit of the hare to run obliquely or in zigzags to survey more readily the source of its fright; for some time they startle it but slightly by successive appearances at a distance, but gradually increase its harassment until it bounds hither and thither in terror, when they rapidly close in and seize it, the entire chase commonly lasting but a few minutes. The quarry is customarily taken alive to camp, where it is quickly rent to fragments and the entrails and flesh and most of the bones consumed; the skin usually passes into possession of a matron for use as infantile clothing or cradle bedding, while the ears are kept by the youth who first seized the game until his feat is eclipsed by some other event—unless chance hunger sooner tempts him to transmute his trophy into pottage.

While the collective, semiceremonial style of chase alone is thoroughly good form in Seri custom, it is often rendered impracticable by the scattering of the tribe in separate families or small bands, in which case the bura and its associates, like the larger carnivores customarily, are taken by strategy rather than by strength. This form of chase is largely individual; in it archery plays a leading rôle; and in it, too, ambuscade, stealthy lying in wait, and covert assault attain high development. It is closely analogous with the warfare typical of the tribe; and it is especially noteworthy as one of the most effective stimuli to intellectual activity, and hence to the development of invention—if the term may be applied to industrial products so lowly as those of the Seri.

The chief artifact produced by the strategic chase on land would seem to be the analogue of the harpoon used at sea, i. e., the arrow. This weapon is one of the three or four most highly differentiated and thoroughly perfected of the Seri artifacts, ranking with canteen-ollas and balsa, and perhaps outranking the turtle-harpoon. It is fabricated with great care and high skill, and with striking uniformity in details of material and construction. A typical example is 25 inches in length and consists of three pieces—point, foreshaft, and main shaft (feathered toward the nock). The foreshaft is 8¼ inches long, of hard wood carefully ground by rubbing with quartzite or pumice into cylindrical form, about three-eighths of an inch in diameter at the larger end and tapering slightly toward the point; the larger end is extended by careful grinding into a tang which is fitted into the main shaft, the joint being neatly wrapped with sinew. This main shaft is a cane-stalk (*Phragmites communis*?) 15 or 16 inches long, carefully selected for size and well straightened and smoothed; it is feathered with three equidistantly-

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ally shattered, and no prints are known to have been made from it; but the fragments were carefully joined, and were kindly transferred to the Bureau by Mr Von Bayer in 1897, and from them plate XXIX was carefully drawn. The posture (partly concealed by the drapery) is extraordinary, being quite beyond the reach of the average human, and impossible of maintenance for any considerable interval even by the well-wonted Seri. The posture itself partly explains the difficulty of inducing the warriors at Costa Rica to assume it, since it is essentially a fleeting one, and indeed but a part of a continuous and stressful action—it is no less difficult to assume, or to catch in the camera, than the typical attitude of a baseball pitcher in action. The posture thus fortunately caught is quite in accord with the accounts of Seri archery from the esoteric side given by Mashém, and with the exoteric observations of Señor Encinas, Don Andrés, and others; for all accounts agree in indicating that the archer commonly rests inert and moveless as the watching feline up to a critical instant, then springs into movement as swiftly as the leaping jaguar, and hurls, rather than shoots, one, two, or three arrows before rushing in to the death or skulking to cover as the issue may require.

The Seri archery habit is in every way consistent with the general habits of the tribe, alike in the chase and in warfare, in which the tribesmen, actuated by the fierce blood-craze common to carnivores, either leap on their prey with purpling eyes and gnashing teeth, or beat quick and stealthy retreat; and it is especially significant in the light thrown on the bow as a device for swift and vigorous rather than accurate offense, an apparatus for lengthening the arm still more than does the harpoon, and at the same time strengthening and intensifying its stroke. The quick-changing attitudes of half hurling are equally suggestive of the use of the atlatl, and support Cushing's hypothesis[1] that the bow was derived from the corded throwing-stick. While the critical posture of Seri archery is unique in degree if not in kind in the western hemisphere, so far as is known, an approximation to it (illustrated in fig. 22) has been observed in Central Africa.[2] On the whole the Seri mode of using the bow, like its crude form and rude finish, indicates that it is a relatively new and ill-developed artifact, possibly accultural though more probably joined indigenously with the archaic arrow to beget a highly effective device for food-getting as well as for warfare; while the genetic stages are still displayed not only in the homologies between arrow and harpoon, but by the common functions of both arrow and bow with the fire-sticks.

Concordantly, as indicated by the use of the archery apparatus, the individual taking of large game is effected either by stealthy stalking or by patient ambuscade ended by a sudden rush; when, if the chase is successful, the quarry is rent and consumed as at the finish of the

[1] The Arrow: Proceedings Am. Ass. Adv. Sci., vol. XLIV, 1895, pp. 232-240.
[2] Grave's Journey to the Livingston Tree. The Century Magazine, vol. LII, 1896, p. 788.

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224 semiceremonial collective chase. The fleet but wary antelope, the pugnacious peccary, the wandering puma and jaguar, and the mountain sheep of the rocky fastnesses, are among the favorite objects of this style of chase; while the larger land birds and some of the water-fowl are taken in similar fashion.

The smaller land game comprises a tortoise or two, all the local

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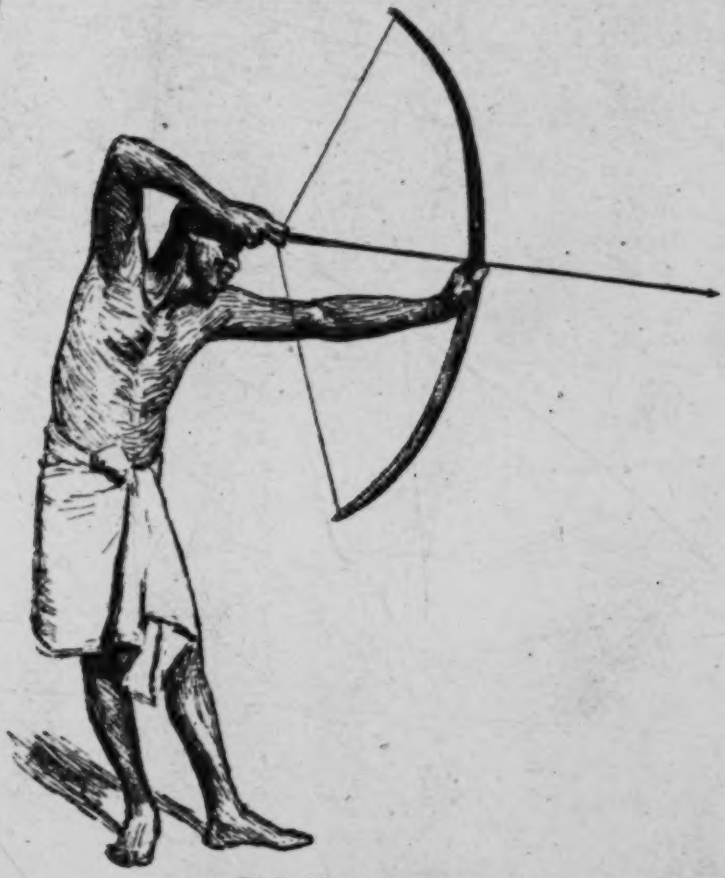

FIG. 22.—African archery posture.

snakes and lizards, and a good many insects, besides various birds, including hawks and owls, as well as the eaters of seeds and insects. The crow and vulture are also classed as edible, though they are rare in Seriland, probably because of the effective scavengering of the province by its human residents. It is a significant fact that the

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smaller rodents, especially the long-tail nocturnal squirrel, are excluded from the Seri menu by a rigidly observed tabu of undiscovered meaning. A general consequence of this tabu is readily observed on entering Seriland; there is a notable rarity of the serpents, the high-colored and swift efts, and the logy lizards and dull phrynosomas so abundant in neighboring deserts, as well as of song birds and their nests; and this dearth is coupled with a still more notable abundance of the rodents, which have increased and multiplied throughout Seriland so abundantly that their burrows honeycomb hundreds of square miles of territory. A special consequence of the tabu is found in the fact that the myriad squirrel tunnels have rendered much of the territory impassable for horses and nearly so for pedestrians, and have thereby served to repel invaders and enable the jealous tribesmen to protect their principality against the hated alien. Seriland and the Seri are remarkable for illustrations of the interdependence between a primitive folk and their environment; but none of the relations are more striking than that exemplified by the timid nocturnal rodent, which, protected by a faith, has not only risen to the leading place in the local fauna, but has rewarded its protectors by protecting their territory for centuries.

In both the collective and the strategic chase, constant advantage is taken of weakness and incapacity, whether temporary or permanent, of the prospective quarry; so that diseased and wounded as well as sluggish and stupid animals are eliminated. The effect of this policy on the fauna is undoubtedly to extinguish the less capable species and to stimulate and improve the more capable; i. e., the presence of the human factor merely intensifies the bitter struggle for existence in which the subhuman things of this desert province are engaged. At the same time, the entrance of the human folk into the struggle characteristic of subhuman species serves to bar them from one of the most helpful ways to the advancement of their kind—i. e., the way leading through cotoleration with animals to perfected zoöculture. The most avidly sought weaklings in the Seri chase are the helpless young, and the heavily gravid dams which are pursued and rent to fragments with a horrid fury doubtless reflecting the practical certainty of capture and the exceptionally succulent tidbits afforded by the fetal flesh; naturally the cruel custom reacts on habitual thought in such wise that the very sight of pregnancy or travail or newborn helplessness awakens slumbering blood-thirst and impels to ferocious slaughter. To such custom and deep-planted mental habit may be ascribed some of the most shocking barbarities in the history of Seri rapine, tragedies too terrible for repetition save in bated breath of survivors, yet explaining the utter horror in which the Seri marauder is held on his own frontier. At the same time the hunting custom and the mental habit explain the blindness of the Seri to the rudiments of zoöculture, and clarify their intolerance of all animal associates, save the sly coyote that habitually

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224 hides its travail and suckling in the wilderness, and perhaps the deified
[225] pelican.[1]

Parallel to the chase of the larger land game is the hunting of horses and other imported stock; for the animals are regarded in no other light than that of easy quarry. The horses of the Seri frontier, like those of wild ranges generally, are strongly gregarious, and the herds are well regimented under recognized leaders, so that the chase of their kind is necessarily collective on the part of both hunters and game; and the favorite method is for a considerable group of either warriors or women to surround the entire herd, or a band cut out from it, "mill" them (i. e., set them running in a gradually contracting circle) and occasionally dash on an animal, promising by reason of exceptional fatness or gravidness. The warrior's customary clutch is by the mane or foretop with one hand and the muzzle with the other, with his weight thrown largely on the neck, when a quick wrench throws the animal, and, if all goes well, breaks its neck;[2] while the huntress commonly aims to stun the animal with a blow from her hupf. In either case the disposition of the carcass is similar to that of other large quarry, save that thought is given to the danger of ensuing attack by vaqueros; so that it is customary to consume at once only the blood and pluck, and if time permits the paunch and intestines with their contents, and then to rend the remainder into quarters, which warriors or even women shoulder and rush toward their stronghold. Burros (which, next to the green turtle, afford the favorite Seri food) and horned cattle are commonly stalked and slain, or, at least, wounded with arrows, so that it is commonly the stragglers that are picked off; though sometimes several animals are either milled or rushed, and thrown by a

224 264

[1] A single incident expressing the first sentiment toward travelling animals must be noted: a few minutes after the group shown in plate XI was photographed, a starveling cur—a female apparently of nearly pure coyote blood and wild's a week of Sun—slunk toward the broken olla-bottle in the left center of the picture, in which a rank horse-foot was simmering; the women heading over the bottle suddenly straightened and shot out her foot with such force and directness that the cur was lifted entirely over the corner of the nearest jacal, and the poor beast fell stunned and moaning, a prematurely born pup protruding from her two-thirds of its length. The sound of the stroke and fall attracted attention throughout the group; the women smiled and greeted approval of the well-aimed kick, and a dozen children gathered to continue the assault. Partially recovering, the cur struggled to its feet and started for the chaparral, followed by the jeering throng; at first the chase seemed spontaneous only, but suddenly one of the smaller boys (the third from the left in the group shown in plate XVI) took on a new aspect—his figure stiffened, his form set, his eyes shot purple and green, and he plunged into the lead, and just before the hunted beast reached cover he seized the protruding embryo, jerked it away, and ran off in triumph. Three minutes afterward he was seen in the shelter of a jacal greedily gorging his spoil in concert with Mrs. Juan, as the Cucapaian boy devours a peeled banana. Meanwhile, two or three males who had struck his troll stood around begging bites and snarling at chance blood spatters on earth, skin, or tattered rags; and as the victor came forth later, licking his chops, he was met by half a dozen lean adolescent ghoulies for his pourboire from the dozen natives lounging about the neighboring jacales. Parallel instances, both observed and gathered at second hand, might be added in numbers; but this may suffice as the sole specific basis for the generalization which places the first below the plane of possible cannibalism—a generalization so broad as to demand some record of data which it would be more agreeable to ignore.

[2] This warrior's clutch, and the notion that it is discreditable if not attended for the succeeding adult to take possession by trespass in hand-to-hand slaughter, are strongly suggestive of ceremonial customs and of studied mimicry of the larger carnivores, such as the jaguar—the "male-striker" of the Maya.

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

strong wrench on the horns or stanned with a blow of war-club or hupf, as conditions may demand. Straggling swine and wandering dogs are occasionally ambushed or stalked and transfixed with arrows, torn hurriedly into fragments, or shouldered and carried off struggling, as exigency may require; while sheep and goats are practically barred from the entire Seri frontier because of their utter helplessness in the face of so hardy huntsmen.

The quantity of stock consumed by the Seri varies greatly with the policy of rancheros and vaqueros. At different times during the last two and a half centuries it has been estimated that the chief portion of the subsistence of the tribe was derived from stolen stock, and it is probable that during the early period of the Encinas régime this

FIG. 23—Desiccated pork.

estimate was fair; but under the Draconian rule of a Seri head for each head of slaughtered stock, the consumption is reduced to a few dozen head annually, including superannuated, crippled, and diseased animals unable to keep up with the herds, those bogged in Playa Noriega and other basins during freshets, the stallions and bulls slain in strife for leadership of their bands, and the festering or semimummied carcasses gladly turned over by idle rancheros on the chance visits of Seri bands to the frontier (such as the specimen in the protograph reproduced in figure 23).

No special devices have been developed in connection with the chase for stock, nor has material progress been made in acquiring Caucasian devices. There are, indeed, indications of a disposition to use

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

177 224 knives in severing the tough integuments and tendons of horses and kine, although the tendency has not yet resulted (as elsewhere noted, ante, pp. 133–154) in the development of a knife-sense; and although boys on the frontier play at roping dogs, no effort to use the riata or any form of rope is made in the actual chase. As naively explained by Mashém amid approving grunts from his clan-mates, they have no time for ropes or knives when hungry.

262 A quantitatively unimportant yet by no means negligible fraction of the normal diet of Seriland is vegetal; and while the sources of vegetal food are many and diverse, the chief constituent is a single product characteristic of American deserts, viz, the tuna, or prickly pear.

222 All of the cacti of the region yield tunas in considerable quantity. The pitahaya is perhaps the most abundant producer, and its name is often given to the fruit; the huge saguaro affords an enormous annual yield, and the still more gigantic saguesa is even more prolific, especially in its immense forests along the eastern base of Sierra Seri; the cina adds materially to the aggregate product, while the nopal, or common prickly pear, contributes a quota acquiring importance from the facility with which it may be harvested. The fruits of all these cacti are sometimes classed as sweet tunas, in contradistinction from the sour tunas yielded in great abundance by the cholla and consumed with avidity by stock, though seldom eaten by men. The edible tunas average about the size of lemons, and resemble figs save that their skin is beset with prickles. The portion eaten is a luscious pulp, filled with minute seeds like those of the fig save that they are too hard for mastication or digestion, its flavor ranging from the sickly sweet of the overcultivated fig to a pleasant acidity. While occasional tunas may be found at any time during the year, the normal harvest occurs about midsummer, or shortly before the July-August humid season, and lasts for several weeks. During the height of the season the clans withdraw from the coast and give undivided attention to the collection and consumption of the fruits, gorging them in such quantities that, according to the testimony of the vaqueros, they are fattened beyond recognition. Commonly the tunas are eaten just as they are gathered, and the families and larger bands move about from pitahaya to pitahaya and from valley to valley in a slovenly chase of this natural harvest, until waning supply and cloying appetite drive them back to the severer chase of turtle and pelican. The fruit is not cooked, and never preserved save in the noisome way of nature, and is rarely transported in quantities or over distances of industrial importance; yet the product may have some connection with the basketry of the tribe. The devices for collecting the fruits, especially from the lofty saguaro and saguesa, are mere improvisations of harpoon shafts, palobianco branches, or chance cane-stalks carried primarily for arrow-making or balsa construction.

[412]

1; McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

is an infallible remedy. On the whole it seems probable that the yerba mala (*Sebastiana bilocularis?*), or yerba de flécha, or mago, or magot, yielded or formed the standard arrow-poison of the Opata and perhaps of other Indians, and that the ill-repute of the shrub survived and spread throughout Mexicanized Sonora in such frequent repetition and common belief as to affect the ideas of residents and travelers alike; but it seems equally probable that the magic-inspired brew of the Seri is entirely distinct.[1]

As suggested by widespread primitive customs, and as illustrated specifically by the arrow-charming, the warfare of the Seri is largely sortilegic, this feature being but an extension and magnification of a corresponding feature of their hunting customs. The economic object of the chase is, of course, the flesh of the quarry; but the hunt normally begins with invocatory or other fiducial ceremonies, culminates in a feast opened with oblations, and ends in the use of horns or hoofs, teeth or bones, mane or tail, as talisman-trophies—primarily pledges of fealty to the favorable potencies, only secondarily symbols of success. The observances illumine the ever-present esoteric object of the chase, which is to gain the favor or overcome the power of the beast-god represented by the animal hunted; in general, this is sought to be effected through mimetic movements, or symbolic objects, associated with that animal-kind, and the retained charm-trophy is valued as a symbol of the placation or outwitting of a particular deity. Similarly, the Seri warrior strives for the supposed deific symbols of the enemy—the scalp or headdress or arrow of the alien tribesman, the fire-breathing and echo-waking (as well as death-dealing) wand of the Caucasian; and the Papago arrows, Yaqui scalps, and white man's firearms are sought avidly, treasured as fetishes, and often carried conspicuously as badges of borrowed prowess.[2] So the Seri are never without alien insignia in the form of weapons. The day before the 1895 expedition entered their stronghold, a band of warriors and women were frightened from a freshly slaughtered cow by a party of yaqueros so suddenly that their arms were left behind—and these

[1] It should be noted that the actuality of the poisonous property ascribed to the yerba mala is in some degree questionable; the plant is the only one of southern Papaguería yielding suitable material for arrow-shafts, and it is possible (if not probable) that it was consecrated to this purpose by the aboriginal Opata and protected by tabu in such wise as to become a sacred and fearsome thing. It is accordingly by no means improbable that the reputed poisonous property is but the product of generations of association, and that the plant is really harmless—an inference supported by experiments on the part of the leader of the 1895 expedition, who swallowed the juice of stem and leaves in two or three minute but increasing doses without perceptible effect. On the other hand, it should be observed that the region is one abounding in toxic juices, and that this shrub is so luxuriant and so free from thorny armament and other protective devices of a mechanical sort as to raise the presumption that it must be protected against herbivorous animals, at least, by chemical constituents of some kind (cf. ante, p. 35).

[2] These motives on the part of the Seri were reciprocated by their tribal comrades; a Papago fetish in the form of an Apache arrowpoint, long worn by an aged warrior as a protection from Apache arrows, was among the spoil of the 1894 expedition; and a "poisoned" Seri arrowhead and foreshaft, worn by a supernumerated Papago "doctor" as a badge of invulnerability to similar missiles, was confidently shown to the 1895 expedition, but was held above price by its wearer—and this despite the fact that he had been christianized for decades, and retained no other pagan symbols.

278 [171] 224 [776] 727 177 411 726 [171]

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

the crudeness of the work, strongly supports the inference that the stone arrow-making of the Seri was originally a fetishistic mimicry of alien devices—a plane, indeed, above which the craft has hardly risen even in recent decades. 174 324

While the Seri are devoid of military tactics in the strict sense of the term, they have certain customs of warfare which seem to be scrupulously observed. These customs are closely akin to those followed in hunting the larger land animals—indeed, the warfare of the tribe is merely an intensified counterpart of their chase. 726 [224]

The favorite tactical device of the warriors, as indicated by the great majority of their battles, is the ambuscade, laid and sprung either with or without the aid of decoys (usually aged women). Sometimes a considerable body act in concert under a prearranged plan; more commonly a few warriors only are involved at the outset, though these may be joined as the crisis approaches by companions lurking behind rocks and shrubs to be either on hand at the finish or in the way of ready flight, according to the turn of the battle-tide; and it is probable that the greater part of the ambuscades prove stillborn by reason of the oozing courage of leaders and the shirking of their supporters if the prospective victims present a bold front, or if the final omens are otherwise adverse. The ambuscade, with its flying contingent, grades into the device of stalking a stationary or slowly moving enemy, the stealthy approach terminating either in covert attack at close range or in sudden rush by a superior force. The theory, or rather the instinctive plan, of the campaign is to seek advantage in both position and numbers, to keep under cover until the instant of attack, to have sure and ample lines of retreat, and in every way to minimize individual risk.

There is a widespread notion toward the Seri frontier that the savages are given to sorties and surprises by night; but both specific testimony and the records indicate, when carefully analyzed, that this tactical device is much less common in practice than in repute, and is not, indeed, characteristic of the tribe. A few known battles began in attacks by night; but the war parties, like the hunting and fishing parties (save in the semiceremonial pelican pilgrimages), display decided preference for daylight in their forays—indeed, there are various indications that the folk are much more timid and oppressed with superstitious fears by night than by day.

In rare cases small parties of aliens have been half openly surrounded and done to death by considerably larger parties of the savage folk; but this method, too, is incongruous with the fixed habits of the tribe and with the deep-planted instinct of avoiding personal exposure.

A considerable number of the long list of homicides charged against the Seri, and marking the beginning of many of their battles, were individual rather than collective, the consummation of inimical impulse sometimes treacherously concealed for favorable opportunity, as in the 186 648

2: Kroeber E-5 (1930)1931 NU31 Seri NU31

789 Some shamans display their ability to hold live coals in their mouth.

Taboos

[88] 784 At first menstruation, the girl eats nothing (!) for 8 days, only drinking water. For 4 nights a *fiesta* is held for her, men and women dancing in a circle, anti-sunwise. She is outside the ring. Her head is not covered. San-pit roasting was unknown to the informant.

[841] At menstruation a woman drinks hot water. She may cook for others. She may not eat deer meat.

[844] After childbirth, both husband and wife eat only *atole* (gruel) and water, he for 4, she for 8 days. She may not work at all, he only a little, such as getting wood, "hunting" as necessary, etc.

[861] There is no puberty ceremony for boys. Nothing is said to be known of any rule forbidding a boy to eat of the first game killed by him.

[224]

[833] Continence before hunting deer was not observed. Nor was there any special treatment or respect due the deer carcass. It is said that deer meat could not be left behind unless there was too much, but this is probably a statement of practise rather than a taboo.

Dances

535 [727] Besides the girl's puberty dance, the Seri also had a scalp dance. Only the frontal piece of the scalp was used. This was hung on a pole. Men (armed) and women danced together around it. If the scalp fell down, all would die.

Dances seen were solo on a plank laid over a shallow pit. Several singers sat by, beating or rattling anything convenient. Each song and dance lasted scarcely three minutes. The tempo is fast. The step is a quick double shuffle with alternate feet. In one type, the dancer held to a stick with one hand, his body and hanging arm remaining as motionless as possible. Another type was without the stick, the dancer holding a gourd rattle and keeping his body bent forward somewhat.

534 171 Rattles are of gourds, e'Xĕc, on a stick, or of cocoons, Xekakĕ'ntta. Deer-hoof rattles were denied. The cocoons are on a band worn below the knee. The Yaqui-Mayo wear such knee-bands of cocoons; and sometimes of deer-hoofs. The Gila Pima also know the cocoon band.

Various Religious Items

276 Datura (toloache, jimsonweed) does not appear to have been used. Even the plant seems unknown, although it is said to occur in the Seri range.

778 789 Rain making seems to be by amulet rather than by direct shamanistic power. For instance, Antonio Herrera wears a small object

2: Kroeber E-5 (1930)1931 NU31 Seri NU31

NU 583 As to the "total absence" (p. 285) of marriage purchase, whereas I found it, such purchase can hardly be believed to have originated wholly within the last 35 years, in view of its wide distribution in native America.

114 614 The whole matter of maternal lineages crystallized into totemic clans with matron rule (pp. 10-11, 167-8, 269 seq.) seems a fantasy. A careful reading of the passages in questions reveals how much McGee has built up on statements which he conscientiously admits to have been slender, probable only, and subject to possible misunderstanding. It must be remembered that in 1894 the matriarchate as original and primitive was still standard anthropological doctrine. At any rate, I got nothing suggesting even matrilineal reckoning in my indirect approaches to the subject, and explicit denials when it was directly presented.

114 342 That house-building may now and then be "accompanied by a chant" (p. 223) is possible, though it seems out of accord with the haphazard and shiftless methods of Seri work and the flimsy irregularity of their homes; but that the chant was "usually led by the eldest matron" seems more matriarchate.

114 174 That the Upanguayma, Guayma, and Tepoka were successively "extruded" (p. 75) would be correct if there were anything to show that the Seri were the parent stock of superior virtue, conservatism, and faithful attachment to their original habitat.

114 601 The statement (p. 11) that "kinship terms are strikingly scanty," made in the face of round-about and imperfect speech communications with the Seri, I cite only as an indication of the degree of McGee's readiness to fall back upon his preconceptions when facts became thin.

114 304 I did not note the absence of superior medial incisor teeth observed by McGee (p. 169) in married women. If a regular practise, its connection with the puberty rite would be a natural inference. But knocking out of teeth is a rare custom in America.

114 224 McGee's statements (pp. 196-7) that it is "undignified, if not wrong" to kill deer other than with the hands, and that jackrabbits are "customarily taken alive to camp," seem over-emphases. That a sense of sport or passing pride, or lack of weapons, now and then leads to such happenings, I do not doubt; but the Seri seem too practical and unromantic to exact rules on the point. I suspect that a youth who insisted on living up to them would soon be considered a vain lore. I may add that I saw a crippled wild duck hobble about the camp on Tiburon for two days, being played with occasionally by the children—without unusual roughness or unkindliness—and that finally it wandered to the water and gradually drifted off without notice being taken.

114 302 614 Face painting is construed by McGee as sematic of totemic line-

2:Davis & Dawson I-5 (1922-1960) 1945
NUSI Seri NUSI

283 from coarse, wiry grass stems, and saved all
302 the brushings to be used in the making of strong threads and cords.

The fleetness of foot and remarkable physi-
147 cal endurance of these people attest to the
491 rigorous and difficult life in Seriland where the ability of an individual to survive a season of want depended upon the reserve energy of his own body by which he could carry himself long distances in search of food and yet have strength to return to a water-hole, left miles behind. The slender, sinewy limbs and capacious chests of the Seris, in whom no trace of obesity has ever been observed, show clearly the result of untold centuries of selection of the strong by the severity of the environment, where water,
[312] too heavy for transport, too difficult of storage, is yet always within reach of an organism strong enough to journey ten, twenty, or even fifty miles in search of it.

Perhaps the most severe physical exercise
224 practiced by the Seris was the chase of animal game, particularly since it was often resorted to only after a period of weakening hunger which prompted the all-out effort to obtain adequate food supply. Days of wandering over the deserts in search of vegetable food were sometimes unrewarded, and although rabbits were to be had for the chase, they were too small to be of much consequence in the feeding of a family. The deer were fairly plentiful and provided excellently for a lasting feast.

The deer hunt was conducted by several tribesmen without weapons. When an animal was sighted it was followed by one and circled by others of the party, chased until frantic and exhausted, whereupon one of the men rushed upon it, threw it to the ground and caved in its skull with a stone.

The most avidly sought prey in the Seri chase were the helpless young and heavily pregnant does which were pursued and rent to fragments with a horrible fury, particularly with intent upon the succulent tidbits afforded by the fetal flesh.

222 A time of ease and plenty came each summer, for usually in late May or June the cactus plants with which Seriland abounds begin to mature their fruits. In the foothills of Sierra Seri on the mainland, great

Class	Species Reported	Species Identified	Percentages
Mammals	21	9	5
Birds	23	6	4
Reptiles and Amphibians	25	11	7
Fish	36	23	14
Molluscs	36	21	13
Crustaceans	10	2	1
Total:	160	72	45

These figures show clearly the dependence of the Seris on marine life for a major source of their diet. Today, pinta, baya, cubera and sardinera are their primary source of income with meat and sea-turtles ranking second in importance. Several species of clams, limpets and gastropods supplement this diet.

All other animals represent only incidental additions to the menu. During the last war, sharks and mantas were hunted extensively for their liver, then a source of vitamin D. But since the war, the demand for shark liver has declined and because of this, a considerable income for the Seris has been lost. Shark and manta fishing have been abandoned for these fish were taken only for the commercially profitable liver and not for their flesh.

Fishing and Hunting

Seri fishing techniques are simple. In the past they used double-pronged spears and for the larger fish, harpoons. Today the spears are employed chiefly in fishing while the harpoons are reserved exclusively for sea-turtles. Hook and line fishing was introduced after 1930, as Kroeber (1931) saw none during his visit to Kino in 1930, and it is now the standard method of fishing. An abortive and unsuccessful attempt was made several years ago with net fishing. Another change has occurred within the past fifty years. The old balsas have been replaced by flat-bottomed plank boats outfitted with five-horsepower motors or sails. These motors, incidentally, are leased from the Mexican fish traders because none of the Seris are rich enough to own one.

Bait is obtained by dynamiting schools of small fish in coastal waters or by collecting them at low tide in the tidal pools and from under rocks. Fishing usually begins at dawn and lasts until noon when, as a rule, all of the "pangas", as the boats are called, return to Desemboque. In stormy weather no fishing expeditions are made and when this occurs, starvation becomes a real menace. Harpooning of sea-turtles takes place far out in the Gulf. It is done only at night in exceptionally calm weather by the light of torches or Coleman lanterns.

Hunting as it is done today has changed from the time of McGee's visit in 1894-95. The bow and arrow has disappeared completely except for a crude and diminutive form used as a toy by small boys. Iron spears once used in shark and manta hunting are now carried primarily as a weapon against the numerous and much feared rattlesnakes. They are said to be used occasionally in the peccary hunt. Old .22s or 30/30 rifles are owned by several of the men, some of whom specialize in hunting.

224 Game pursuit is usually done on foot, mostly in the winter and very little in the summer. The intense heat of the desert in the summer makes hunting unattractive. The most frequent trophies are the Sonoran bighorn, peccary, cottontail and jack-rabbits. Sometimes, semi-wild burros, running loose on the adjacent extensive Mexican "rancherias", are poached for meat. The peccary is the only animal hunted with the aid of dogs. Large rodents are dispatched by [223 410] sling-shot, stick, stone, or shot with a .22 caliber rifle. Birds, such as sea-gulls, ducks and pelicans, are clubbed, stoned or shot with a small caliber rifle.

462 While fishing and hunting are primarily men's occupations, the gathering 224 of the terrestrial and marine animals is almost exclusively women's work. 226 Rattlesnakes and other reptiles are often killed and brought to the encampments by the women from their morning trek into the desert after firewood and fruit. Small fish and marine invertebrates in the tidal pools are collected by women, aided by children of both sexes.

252 Preparation of meat is quite simple. It is either boiled in hot water with [163] salt added as the only seasoning or else roasted whole, if small enough, over an open fire with or without a grill. The use of spices such as tomato sauce, chili, peppers, and the like, depend upon the tastes of the individuals and also upon the availability of money.

225 In individual competence as hunters or fishermen the men show a great deal 224 of variability. Some excel in fishing while others do so in hunting. Hand in 226 hand with this, goes the degree of knowledge of the local natural history and, as expected, the best fishermen lead in the knowledge of fishes while the best hunters possess the most extensive knowledge of terrestrial animals and insects. It has also been observed that boys were far ahead of adults in their knowledge of inconspicuous or otherwise commercially unimportant creatures such as insects, obscure marine invertebrates and small fishes. Interest in the commercially or otherwise economically important forms of animals unquestionably becomes overwhelming in adult life while much of the natural history lore learned in youth is forgotten.

Food Preferences and Taboos

262 A number of animals were reported as being a part of their diet in the past but which were not used at the present time. Several species of shells collected from kitchen middens along the coast were thus identified. In some instances it has been denied that a certain animal was used for food; yet, later when such a beast was brought to the camp, it would be added to the menu. Undoubtedly, some of the species were held in low esteem as food and the Seris preferred not to admit eating them.

Large fishes, especially pinta and baya, sea-turtles, and the very large chuckwalla lizard, which is brought back from rare expeditions to San Esteban Island, are the preferred cuisine. Cochi fish, also called puercos, are disdained. Large catches of these were frequently brought in from the sea, only to be unceremoniously dumped on the beach and left to the dogs and the vultures. But when other fish were scarce, the puercos were eaten. Pelicans, once an

5:Dawson N-5 (1940) 1944 NU31 Seri NU31

an important handicraft among these Indians. They made a shallow, coil type basket such as is characteristic of many southwestern tribes. The Seri basket, however, was remarkable for its extreme lightness in proportion to capacity, a quality due to the spongy character of the coil made of a whisp of splints of the torote. Several torotes are found in the region, the commonest species being *Jatropha cardiophylla*. Also used were the torote amarillo, *Jatropha spatulata*, torote blanco, *Bursera microphylla*, and torote prieto, *Bursera laxiflora*. The woof consisted of splints of palo blanco, *Acacia Willardiana*, or of baraprieta, *Caesalpinia gracilis*, deftly interlaced by means of a bone awl to form a smooth, practically waterproof utensil.

In pre-Columbian times the Seris commonly sought wild game, mostly deer, without the aid of weapons, using only their tremendous physical endurance against their prey, chasing the animal until it was exhausted and could be thrown to the ground. With the introduction of iron, however, the development of the bow and arrow achieved prominence, for the shaping and fastening of points had long retarded the exploitation of these implements. Few straight stemmed or straight grained plants grow in Seriland suitable for making arrow shafts, but on the flanks of the deeper gorges of Sierra Seri and Sierra Kunkaak on Tiburon Island, the Indians found one leafy shrub that filled the need, *Sapium biloculare*. The juice of this plant is also said to have been used for arrow poison. The bow was preferably of palo blanco, wrapped and strung with mesquite fiber cord.

The modern Seri tribe consists of barely more than 100 souls, with early extinction threatening from imported diseases. Their natural habits are now vastly modified and they live a comparatively sedentary life near the village of Kino, scavengering for fish heads and other refuse discarded by the fishermen, now and then fishing for themselves when in need. Every year, however, they trek off to the cactus forest for the annual feast, and in late summer many may be seen camping among the mesquite groves near the Kino well where an abundance of both mesquite beans and water makes for easy living.

Smithsonian F-5 (1965-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

I have no idea, of course, what the diet may have been in the past since only archaeology can suggest the answer. But I am sure that there has been much change in their diet since Kroeber saw them, not in the basic pattern but in the composition. With the introduction of hook and line fishing, the percentages swung in favor of fish, while decimation of the marine turtle cut down the importance of this animal. Simultaneously, the Seris now have available manufactured or imported Mexican food items: flour, sugar, rice, potato (when no one is looking; potatoes are not supposed to be sold to them because they make *tepache* from them which makes them grossly ill) fish in cans, coffee and tea. Dependence on the products of the desert has dwindled. Rattlesnakes, desert turtles and chuckawalla still find their way to the Seri kitchen but not too frequently. Pelican and sea gull will be eaten only when rough times beset them but are disdainfully refused at other times. My own estimates, impressions not supported by any attempt to measure their diet, are as follows:

fish	50+%
turtle	8-
Mexican import	20
desert plant	7
desert land animals incl. stock	5
shellfish	10
total marine origin	68+
total desert origin	12
imported origin	20

Another important change in the pattern is the unquestionable decrease of hunting (other than marine animals) in Seri life, as of the domestic stock stealing, the place of which has been taken in a way by the dependence on manufactured foods and items. Hunting nowadays is done rarely and only few individuals will devote some months out of the year to it. Stealing of domestic stock has ceased for practical purposes, since in the past it lead to virtual extermination of these Indians. Occasionally the Seri kill off a semi-wild burro, herds of which run about loose in the desert or they'll get leavings off one, hunted down by a Mexican trader or fishermen.

The Seris' basic tools of game procurement have changed. Bow and arrow were still much in evidence and in use in McGee's time but seem to have gone out soon after. Kroeber did not mention them and by now they are quite extinct, except as clumsy toys little boys use to play with. The throwing stick is still used on rabbits—any stick one can scrounge on a moment's notice will do for the purpose. If any traps or falls had been used we do not know of them. Accidental stones may be used much in the same way as throwing sticks. In general, various sorts of fire arms, mostly .22 and .38 caliber are owned by a good many Seri men and have replaced other weapons in the terrestrial hunt.

More important are changes in the fishing procedures. Formerly spear and detachable harpoon were their only marine weapons. Even as late as 1930, during Kroeber's visit, the Seris made no use of hook and line. But now, hook and line of

[P. 7A]

[apparently a line of type has been omitted here-Analyst]

462 desert plants or littoral fishlets from tide-pools
or of the shellfish. Both men and women will
[224] bring in an occasional rattler, although women
[857] are more likely to do this because they spend more
[883] time in the desert. Children of both sexes are
engaged in the female occupations here, but ado-
lescent boys already join in their fathers' hunts
on land or sea.

342 Housing has undergone some changes. In the
184 desert or on Tiburon the Indians construct the
kind of shelter they did in the recorded past,
an ocotillo frame, bent over in the middle and
covered up with dried plant debris and twigs
from the desert, or with the sail cloth. But in
Desemboque they have more substantial houses—
of wattle and adobe, with flat roofs, rectangular
or square, often with corrugated tin or drift
planks and other debris piled up on top, or along
the walls.

178 In the remainder of their material culture, not
much has been left from years past although one
must remember that from the very beginning of
recorded Serian history it has been of a most
[291] meager sort. Pelican robes, which some Seris ap-
[412] parently still wore in 1930 are gone for good.
So are the stone tools. So is the pottery which had
[323] probably disappeared in Kroeber's time. The hu-
[301] man hair necklace with rattlesnake rattles is also
[291] a thing of the past. The rattlesnake skin belts
McGee (1898:170) described and figured are
probably all gone. I havn't seen or heard of any.

412 But what remains much as they had been in
285 1894 are the bone-awls. These are made of burros'
carpals and the blossoming of basketry, owing to

[P. 8A]

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

III

MAMMALS

262 [231] water for a week until it escaped. There was no intent to do away with it and serve it up for dinner later on.

The 3 species reported as eaten in the past are kangaroo rat, sea lion and the ringtail cat or cácomistle. Of these the little rodent had been [252] supposedly "boiled in hot water with salt" which [261] method of preparation may indicate that it happens quite recently yet. It is quite possible that in times of famine this animal is still used. The sea [432] lion has been reported as "eaten once a long time ago. All of it. But not now. Its hide was once sold also but now it isn't used at all." This conflicts [114] with McGee's statement (McGee, 189:202) that there was a taboo on eating sea lions among the Seris and there is no way to reconcile the information.

[114] McGee's report may be as truthful as are the uncertain and hazy comments of the present day Indians.

● 224 On the other hand, the cougar belongs to a very dubious category, unless we can rely on Miguel Barnett's memory. All 4 of the younger informants emphatically deny that the cougar has ever been hunted for meat. But Miguel Barnett claimed that this has been done in the past, although he could not tell how long ago. Kroeber says nothing about this animal and this makes it difficult to date the events. At the time of Kroeber's visit, Miguel was at least 25 years old and the cougar could have been hunted either then or earlier. But today the Seris do not eat the [262] flesh of the big cat and their abhorrence of it has been confirmed by the Mexicans to whom I talked about the subject, and who relish cougars' meat. This apparent distaste for the *el tigre's* flesh may [178] well be a recent development quite unconnected with the lack of weapons. McGee (1894: *loc. cit.*) casually mentions that the Seris hunt both cougars [411] and the jaguars but cites no evidence for it. Yet [177] in his time Seris' almost only weapons were the bow and arrow and a lance which today has been replaced by firearms. I am unable to explain this contradictory behaviour.

262 Finally, there is the Ringtail cat or cácomistle. Although this beast has been reported as part of the diet, the information isn't too reliable. I had [124] no way of checking whether this was the animal the Indians had in mind. Their description of it seemed to answer some other unspecified animal and their answers were confused. The fact is that the Ringtail cat does occur in the Seri territory and they are surely familiar with it.

Of the remaining 11 species none were ever mentioned by any of the informants as having been ever eaten. Their denial of eating the coyotes were most vehement. Coyote figures out probably

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Coyote figures out probably

262 as an important and perhaps disreputable figure in the mythology although nothing but scraps [273] and bits of information suggest this. It is possible that there is actually a taboo on eating this animal or perhaps it is so disreputable that eating its flesh would put a gourmant in an inferior position.

How important is the Seri mammalian diet is hard to tell. It certainly looms more heavily during [224] the winter, because in the cool season hunting is easier than during the heat of the summer and [221] in fact this is when most of it is done by the ardent hunters. Too, winter subjects the Seris to greater hazards and is apt to increase their dependence on the desert resources over that during the summer, even if these resources are scantier at that time.

[136] To all of these animals one should add the semi-wild burros running about the extensive Mexican [224] rancherias. The Indians poach on them frequently using their fire arms, usually the .22 caliber rifles. In any case, it appears that during the summer when the field work was carried out, the mammalian diet figures quite lightly on the Seri table.

252 *Food preparation*: Very little is done in the preparation of the mammalian meat. All that I [263] could observe was the boiling of it in hot water spiced with salt. The Indians were saying that in order to have the meat of a peccary, deer or bighorn ready to eat one must boil it 2-3 hours. The same procedure is followed with the meat of the burros. In contrast to this, as shall be seen later, [251] fish are boiled as well as roasted while the turtles are also dried and salted. Preparation of meat is [462] done by women, certainly at least in the encampments when they are present.

262 *Food preferences*: Some of the Seri food preferences have already been mentioned. At the top of the list as the desirables are the peccary, the deer, the bighorn and the blacktail jackrabbit; at the bottom is the badger, whose meat "is not much good." There is also preference by sex. Females of both the bighorn and peccary are preferred over the males "because they do not have the bad odor like the males." This sort of favoritism also occurs among the Mexicans. However, the Indians did not elaborate beyond this point.

237 *Other economic uses*: Apart from meat, hides 178 are also used. The hides of the deer, bighorn and peccary had been used for sleeping mats although [513] this matter has been expressed in the past tense. Miguel Barnett also suggested that the bighorn [291] hides had been used for clothing by the Indians in the past—but he neglected to say how long ago. During Kroeber's stays, no Seris went about in the animal or bird (pelican) skins but earlier when McGee visited them they went about in these simple garments. Judging then by Miguel's memory, the use of the bighorn hide for clothing must be pushed back to the period of World War I or even earlier.[1]

[1] Miguel Barnett indicated that the "fur" of the bighorn had once been worn for the cold season "but not now."

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237 On the other hand, the hides of all of these three animals had been traded off to the Mexicans, [439] but this again was now discarded. This would [182] merely indicate the fluctuation of collapse of the demand from the outside rather than any intrinsic change in the Seri values.

Incidental use of the horns of the bighorn had been denied by all of the younger informants although admitted by Miguel Barnett. However, as I observed, the horns of this sheep are sometimes [415] used as drinking cups. Several of them were [181] lying around in the usual disorderly way of the Seris, now and then picked up for drinking and then again discarded. But the use of them struck me as most casual.

● 224 *Hunting:* Hunting takes a variety of forms 411 and includes a variety of weapons, from .22 caliber and .30/.30 caliber rifles to spear, stone and throwing stick. Bighorn and deer are followed on foot but without dogs, probably because without dogs they may be easier to surprise. This hunt takes place in daytime. But the peccary is hunted [231] with both the spear and the rifle and with a pack [885] of dogs, and only by the adult men. There is an emphasis on the "adult," this surely owing to the certain amount of danger connected with the chase of the peccaries. The weapons of the chase dwindle to the throwing stick or a stone when it comes to the jackrabbit. Badgers, I was told, are also killed with the same weapons. But formerly, the informants said, bow and arrow was much instrumental in hunting the smaller beasts.

* 825 Other animals, according to the Seris, are not [224] hunted now, nor had they been in the past. Justification for this ranged from the usual "because it isn't done" to the more specific reasons. The skunk is "neither hunted nor eaten because it [225] stinks." The whale is considered "too big to kill" while the killer whale is "too fierce." The harmless *tonita* (dolphin)[1] was reported somewhat hazily as "sometimes killed" but the comments were inconclusive and were denied by other informants.

[224] Two other species had been reported as hunted in the past but not at the present time. The Ringtail cat was supposedly hunted with the slings while the sea lion was hunted down "with a rifle [225] or rock but not with the harpoon because of its great strength, it would break the harpoon." This, however, was "perhaps 25 years ago." Why the sea lion is no longer pursued is uncertain, unless there is again a lack of demand from the outside while the Serian economy is so much centered on fishing.

231 *Pets:* How many species of animals are kept as pets on and off is difficult to say. Like most hunting and gathering groups the Seris are fond of pets but their interest in them depends entirely on an accidental capture. Among the wild mammals of the region there are few that could be captured and tamed easily. The badger which I mentioned already was the only mammal I saw

[237] [1] I have seen bones of beached whales used for stools and [362] also the skull of the *tonita* used as a chair. But it must be remembered that these animals got stranded on the beach. They were not deliberately hunted down.

1/2 [i.e. - deer, bighorn and peccary - Analyst]

*825 the Seri think, but the captive badger held for a week certainly did not fit this description. Finally, the peccary is held in great respect by the Seris owing to its combativness, nastiness and aggressiveness while in the pack. For this reason peccary hunting is done only by the adults, the Seris [224] said.

Other than this and with the exception of the bat, the Seri do not particularly fear mammals. Their attitudes may be best described as being very much matter of fact and pragmatic.

The situation is slightly different with the bat. [177] The older ones surround it with a great deal of folklore, possibly related to or originated from

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262 them to their shelter and held them there for several days before they and their families finally ate them up. The turtles are also a well-liked item.

As already indicated in some instances there exists preference for a particular part of an animal. Of the Gila monster only the fat tail was said to have been eaten, and of both rattlers, the head and the tail are discarded on the grounds
* [825] that they contain toxin. Finally the toad and the gecko and *Xantusia* are all rejected as completely venomous.

178 It is also evident that changes in the Seri
262 taste have occured in the course of the past several decades. Some animals are on their way out as food, and here we have the Gila monster, the whipcoach, the red racer and smaller lizards. In several cases, and this includes the Gila monster, the responses indicated that the animal had been eaten in the past. I also observed that on the sly, the Seris would eat them when other food was in short order. But they are reluctant to admit this and often altogether denied it.

Hunting

● 224 Most reptiles are captured by hand or else killed
[225] with a stick, stone or pea-shooter. Except for the turtles, the Seris will not make special expeditions. But it is certain that if they find themselves on any of the islands near the shores of Baja California they will go ashore deliberately in search of the chuckawalla.

225 The turtles are another matter. Here now, just as in the past, special expeditions are made in order to get them. These expeditions take place
[501] nowadays in the usual flat-bottomed plank boats, either motor or oar propelled. The hunt takes place only during unusually quiet and dark nights, when the Gulf is smooth and calm and there is neither wind nor ripple. With the slightest disturbance,
[354] turtle fishing is impossible. It is all done with the
[411] torch lights or Coleman lanterns. The principal and only weapon is the harpoon, identical with that described and illustrated by McGee. The turtles are then harpooned, dragged into the boat and either left alive, when the hunters have a sale of live ones in mind, or pounded to death with a
[251] club or oar, quartered and then either consumed on the spot or else dried and salted."

[224] While the collecting of the smaller animals us-
[462] ually falls to the children or women, turtle hunting is men's job. Men, too, usually get the chuckawalla because they usually visit more distant islands.

Pets

231 None of the reptiles are pets in a real sense. Those few that might be kept are only held until the day when they are butchered and eaten. It is motivated more by the wish to preserve fresh food than by any affection for the animal. The turtles, • the tortoises and the chuckawalla belong here. Occasionally a Seri boy will string a lizard, a *Sceloporus*

"The loggerhead is hunted in the daytime because, owing to its great strength, night hunt would be too dangerous. Two harpoons are always used on it, while for the smaller species, one harpoon usually suffices.

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XI

SUMMARY

224 Hunting is very decidedly secondary to fishing, although it is still much practiced by certain individuals and in a desultory way probably by all.

462 There is a clean cut division of labor in all these occupations. Fishing and hunting are men's occupations, gathering of the desert animals and beachcombing for the intertidal animals is largely the job of women and children. Boys get broken [868] into men's occupations in adolescence, girls into women's jobs very much earlier.

224 Avoidance of fishing or hunting certain creatures appears much more a matter of custom than of well defined and socially rationalized attitude. Frequently an animal is not hunted simply because the Seri feel it is too big and too strong for them to tackle.

157 Through all these activities, Seri individualism is curiously woven and accounts for the failure of anything that might resemble a collective effort.

Food Preferences and Preparation

252 Seri food is prepared in a simplest sort of way. [263] Boiling in water is usual with salt and sometimes a few other spices added. While most food is prepared that way, snakes and fishes are usually fried, without any ingredients. There has been a [178] notable shift toward greater fanciness in the ingredients, as they have become more readily available.

262 There are many preferences. Animals are scaled in desirability. Some fishes, marine turtles, chuckawalla, deer and peccary and duck are at the top of the list; lower animals, smaller fishes including puerco in the middle, while the sea gull and the pelican are probably at the very bottom of the pit. This again reflects temporal changes in tastes [178] although not necessarily a direct influence from the Mexicans.

Pets

231 Few pets are kept, other than dogs. Such animals as come are those captured accidentally. In most cases they are bird nestlings.

Taxonomy

* 825 Differential criteria are applied in the classification of different groups. There is less tendency to group birds than to group different mammals and classificatory ideas break down almost completely in smaller animals, especially insects and molluscs. Considering the economic importance of the molluscs, poor ability to distinguish the Gastropods from the Pelecypods is striking.

The classificatory criteria differ for different groups. Mammals are generally recognized by the furiness, birds by the ability to fly and the pres-

000 search out an old fish head or Pelican bone. Discouraged, never!

123 223 We had intended going to Alcatraz *(Pelican Island)* and have the Indians secure more skins for us at night, but the wind was strong and not favorable, so the trip was put off. The Indians hold up torches of dry *pitahalla*, while another Indian knocks the Pelicans over the head.

123 224 Stan and three Indians started out for the *picachos* with rifles in a hunt for mountain lions and a *tigre* our Indian said he saw. They returned in the afternoon tired and hungry and carrying no game. Stan had mounted the highest peak, an almost perpendicular one, and dangerous climb.

123 593 One member of the hunting party, Santo Blanco *(Holy White)* which belies his name---as he is neither white nor holy---evidently didn't find his dinner waiting for him, and proceeded to beat up his poor wife. Perhaps she didn't expect him so soon or perhaps the larder was empty. At any rate, another woman, Luis Torres' wife, flew to her assistance and grabbed the rifle or stick and he cut her hand cruelly with his knife. She was brought whimpering to our camp, her poor thin hand dripping blood. One or two sympathizing women, crying softly, followed her.

I immediately put some flour over the cut and tore up strips of cotton goods and wrapped them round and round her hand, then pressed the veins to check the hemorrhage, and held her hand up. After fifteen or twenty minutes it ceased to drip, and an Indian brought me some mentholatum from my grip. I bathed her hand in salt water while she whimpered softly, put on the salve and re-wrapped her hand in clean goods and she returned to her camp. Her child picked up the discarded bloody clothes and took them to her.

123 Roberto had gone back for the things he had left, and at noon had returned with the car to Santa Cruz, intending to return by mule in the evening. He returned long after dark after five hours in the saddle. He had been bucked off once and lost in a jungle of timber, both down and standing for two hours. He was fenced inside this tangle, he said, finding it almost impossible to escape.

The mule was later to be tied up, rolled into the boat and taken to the Island for my use, so I would not get worn out walking and carrying food and water.

Again, we were lulled to sleep by the murmur of the sea.

On account of unfavorable conditions, we did not start in the boat the next morning, but fully expected to start the following morning. After breakfast we decided to give the Indians a feast. One Seri secured a five-gallon can three-quarters filled with water, and one by one I poured four cups of flour in it. I hesitated a moment and the Indian said "too much water," and all the crowd waited with bated breath. When I poured in an extra cup-full a great sigh of

[text continues on p.200]